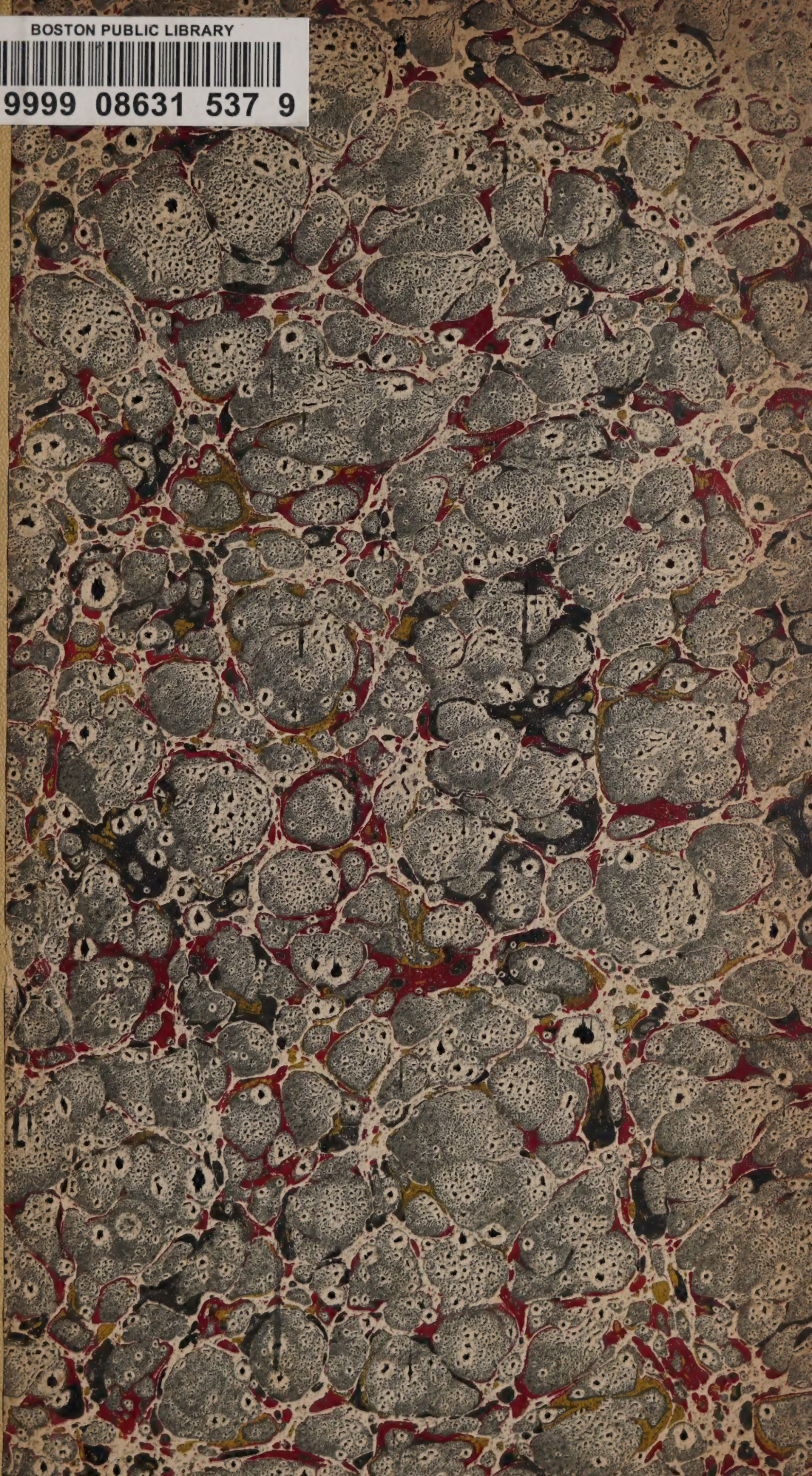


BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 08631 537 9



No. 4551.158



7551.158



REV. MR. DURFEE'S

Commemorative Discourse,

IN

GREAT BARRINGTON,

1866.



4551.138

Advantages of Retrospection.

A

COMMEMORATIVE DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Congregational Church and Society

IN

GREAT BARRINGTON,

MAY 13, 1866,

WITH AN APPENDIX.

BY REV. CALVIN DURFEE.

TALK YE OF ALL HIS WONDROUS WORKS.—Ps. cv. 2.

BOSTON:

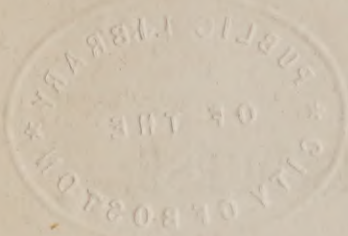
PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN & SON, 42 CONGRESS STREET.

1866.

From 5543.7

93279

May 8, 1869



At a meeting of the Congregational Church in Great Barrington, Friday, March 2, 1866, the following Resolution was adopted:—

“Whereas, it appears from the Records of our Church that the Rev. CALVIN DUFEE, of Williamstown, is now, and has been for half a century past, a member of this church; and believing it would be interesting and profitable for the present members of this church and congregation to hear from him,—it is

“Voted, That a cordial and earnest invitation be extended to him to address this church and people concerning the events which have transpired within his knowledge during that long period; at such time during the ensuing season as shall best suit his convenience, and that our pastor be requested to extend to him this invitation.”

A true copy of the Record.

Attest.

W. MCINTYRE, CLERK.

DISCOURSE.

DEUTERONOMY IV. 32.

ASK NOW OF THE DAYS THAT ARE PAST.

OBEDIENCE to the requirement here made is both pleasant and profitable. For who is not interested and benefited by an acquaintance with the history of his own country ; of the town where he was born ; of the family in which he was nurtured ; and of the church where he worshiped in earlier days ; and where, he perhaps for the first time publicly "avouched the Lord to be his God." An acquaintance with the past unfolds the advantages of virtue and piety ; and sets forth the sad and ruinous consequences of vice and immorality. So, manifestly, all history teaches. By a thoughtful recurrence to the past, many "a sinner has been converted from the error of his ways," and many a backslider has had "the joys of God's salvation restored." And no doubt a large portion of our eternity will be passed in pondering on the dispensations of providence and grace.

With what propriety then are we called upon to gather up instruction, and receive useful impressions from the years gone by ? "*Ask now of the days that are past.*" Almost the entire chapter from which these words are taken is devoted to a recapitulation of the most remarkable events in the history of the children of Israel ; and from that review is deduced an exhortation for active obedience and devout gratitude. Indeed, the entire history of God's wonderful dealings with his ancient people was recorded

by the pen of inspiration for our profit, "that the generations to come might know them, even the children that should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God ; but keep his commandments."

And surely I need not remind you that the duty in question is as incumbent on us, as it was on God's ancient people. Indeed our advantages for obtaining instruction from the past are greatly enhanced. And if ever good and important results were secured to any people from retrospection, why may not the same good results be secured to us in the same way ? It certainly is incumbent on those whom age and experience have qualified to speak of the past, to contribute according to their ability for the benefit of those who shall come after them.

Allow me then in this discourse to offer a few remarks on the advantages of retrospection ; glance at the early history of this church ; give some sketches of its deceased pastors ; and then draw such reflections as the progress of the discourse may suggest. In the narrow compass of a single sermon it will be impossible to do anything like full justice to all topics embraced in this general outline.

1. One important lesson which we learn from a survey of the past is to *recognize the overruling providence of God in all the events of life*. It needs but a moment's reflection to convince you that this world must have had a Creator. It resembles a bright and beautiful abode which was originated by an all-powerful and intelligent agent. The evidences of infinite power and wisdom are everywhere displayed ;—in the heavens above ;—in the earth beneath ;—in the animal, physical, mineral, and vegetable kingdoms ;—in the beauty, harmony and fitness of all things. Still, a moment's reflection must satisfy you, that there is a strange unwillingness in the human mind to acknowledge God in all the occurrences of life. To call in question the existence and universal government of God, is one of

the primary elements of human depravity. And though the Christian may be firmly established in his belief of God's existence and providential government, yet how slight is the impression which this great truth makes even on his mind. Now, how shall this tendency to a practical forgetfulness of God be counteracted and overcome? I tell you, my hearers, the more carefully we study the history of that government which God constantly exercises over this world, the more clearly shall we discover, that while "one generation sows in tears, another reaps in joy." The events which to-day look dark and discouraging, in a little while appear to be tending towards a most benevolent result. "All these things are against me," exclaimed the afflicted Patriarch one day; but how was his want of confidence in the wisdom and goodness of Providence rebuked, when he saw the wagons had actually come to carry him down to Egypt to see his long lost son. A careful survey of the past will convince us that the superintending providence of God is to be acknowledged in the government of the world, but especially in the preservation and enlargement of the church. "All these things are against me," has the church often and often been ready to exclaim, when those very trials which were so much dreaded and deplored, were only taking away her dross, and were among the "all things" which were working together for her good.

But the providence of God is particular. It extends to individuals as well as communities. The same reasons that influence God to exercise any providence whatever over this world, are reasons for extending that providence from the worlds above to the falling of a sparrow;—from the work of redemption to the numbering of the hairs of our head. There can be no general providence without a particular providence; just as there can be no general law of gravitation which is not recognized in the falling of the smallest particle of matter. If then the lines are

fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage ; if our returning wants have been daily supplied ; or ‘if our feet have been taken from the horrible pit and the miry clay, and set upon a rock, and if a new song hath been put into our mouth, even praise unto our God,’ to whom are we indebted for all these unnumbered and unmerited favors ? I am sure you will ascribe it all to the good providence of our God, and here join with me in making the pious record, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

2. Another lesson taught us from an acquaintance with the past, is *the tendency of vice to disgrace and ruin*. Everything which has a tendency to make us acquainted with the injurious consequences of vice, must be of unspeakable benefit. Now the history of God’s dealings with mankind, admirably answers this end. Consult the records of the past, especially the sacred records, and you will see what remarkable calamities have befallen mankind as the legitimate results of transgression. The effects of the fall ; the destruction of the old world by the flood ; at a later period the many calamities which came upon the children of Israel, were awful mementoes of God’s hatred of evil. The end for which evil or calamities are sent upon mankind, is the reformation of offenders and the admonition of others. The Apostle Paul, after enumerating some of the sins and plagues of the ancient Israelites, their idolatries and murmurings against Providence, adds : ‘Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples,’ to the intent that we should avoid the like sins.’ And he further tells us that these things were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that readeth understand, and be admonished by the history of the Jews, that sin and its consequences go hand in hand. Let an acquaintance with the past, then, lead us all daily to join in the ancient prayer, “O my soul, come not thou

into their secret,—unto their assembly, mine honor, be thou not united.”

3. Another lesson taught us from an acquaintance with the past, is *the elevating and purifying influence of true piety*. This is to be seen in the history of individuals. Now the usefulness of virtuous examples is proverbial. But where shall we learn the advantages of virtuous examples, without consulting the records of the past; especially the historical portions of the Bible. Many of the Old Testament saints, considering the feeble light and few advantages they enjoyed, were eminent examples of piety. The brevity of the Scriptures did not allow the sacred penmen to write extended memoirs of those whose lives they record. But you cannot read the brief history of Enoch, of Abraham, of Joseph, of Moses, and David, and a long list besides, without discovering evident traces of deep humility, strict temperance, generous benevolence, unwavering trust, and meek resignation; everything, in short, included in the idea of eminent piety. And who will not celebrate and labor to imitate what is so lovely and praiseworthy? When we survey the history of the past, do we not clearly see that the piety of those who have gone before us was a source of happiness to themselves, and a fruitful source of usefulness to mankind? God himself has set the seal and sanction of his approbation to their piety. With what propriety are we then called upon to “be followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises!”

4. Another lesson derived from a survey of the past, is *the brevity of human life*. The longest life comes to a speedy close. If a man’s life has been one of toil and suffering, of warm benevolence, and active usefulness, still the history of such a man is soon read. Glance at the history of our race, and you will see how rapidly individual has succeeded individual, and generation has succeeded generation, like shadows over the plain. How

many generations have already come and gone since the first settlement of New England? Visit the towns which were first settled by our Puritan ancestors, and see how numerous are the monuments erected over the graves of the departed. And every such monument is a signal of mortality. It tells you that this world is not your home, that here you have no continuing city, nor abiding place. The very privileges you now enjoy were once the inheritance of those who have long since gone down to the tomb. The venerable men who were once so active and self-sacrificing in laying the foundations of this religious society, are now all numbered among the dead. The very soil which you now cultivate, was once cultivated by hands that are now mouldering back to dust. The very streets in which you walk from day to day, were once traversed by those who have long since gone the way of all the earth. As you survey the past can you resist the impression that you, too, are rapidly hastening through those scenes which have borne your fathers to the tomb? Is there not here a powerful motive to diligence in preparing for our final departure? And though our names may be lost among our posterity,—though it may not be known in a little while that we ever lived on this earth, yet the name of the righteous shall never be lost in the book of God's remembrance.

But it was my original purpose to make this discourse chiefly commemorative or historical. On the third day of November, 1816, fifty years ago this year, with trembling steps I came before this church, and in the presence of God, angels, and men, assumed the vows of a Christian profession, received the ordinance of baptism at the hands of the Rev. Mr. Wheeler, and for the first time sat down at the table of the Lord. Some ten years afterwards, when I entered the ministry, I obtained from the Rev. Mr. Burt his individual certificate, merely stating that I was a

member of this church in regular standing. But I never supposed that certificate dissolved my original connection with this church. Having therefore obtained help of God to continue until this time, I have had a strong desire, if God permit, to come back to this church of my early love, all of whose communicants I knew personally fifty years ago, and renew my consecration to Christ, and tell you something of our early history, and especially of those early pastors, who have gone the way of all the earth. The service I perform this morning, is a tribute of gratitude and affection; of gratitude to God,—of affection for this people.

I shall attempt nothing more, however, than to bring together, in a narrative form, some leading facts which are scattered over different records. If I should be able to do this in such a manner as to enliven your gratitude, and quicken your diligence in the divine life, it will add not a little to the satisfaction with which I shall contemplate and remember this occasion.

In the year 1722, a number of individuals in the county of Hampshire, petitioned the General Court to set them off a township of land, in the southwest corner of this State. This was accordingly done. And that township included what is now embraced in Sheffield, Egremont, Mount Washington, Great Barrington, Alford, Stockbridge, a part of West Stockbridge, and a portion of Lee. In 1733, this extensive township was divided into the Upper and Lower Housatonic. The Lower Housatonic included probably full one-half of Great Barrington, and received the name of Sheffield.

Sheffield began to be settled by the whites as early as 1725. In January, 1733, the first regular town meeting was held, under the act of incorporation, and town officers were chosen. "Animated by the spirit of the Pilgrims, they voted at their first regular town meeting, to erect a

meeting-house, and to employ a person to preach to them with reference to a settlement." In June, 1735, they gave Mr. Jonathan Hubbard a call to settle among them in the pastoral office; and a church was organized, and Mr. Hubbard was ordained on the 22d of October, 1735. The Council that ordained him consisted of the pastors and delegates from the then neighboring churches; namely, from Litchfield, Ct., Springfield, Northampton, Enfield, and Sunderland. Now had there been at this time another church in this county, it would certainly have been represented in this Council. The church in Sheffield, then, was the first church organized, and Mr. Hubbard was the first minister ordained in this county.

In the month of October, 1734, while a tutor in Yale College, Mr. John Sargeant, in company with the Rev. Mr. Bull, of Westfield, made his first visit to the Indian tribes who dwelt in this region. This was merely a visit of exploration. Sargeant's first sermon to the Indians was preached in this town, October 12, 1734. During this visit, their Indian interpreter, who had lived among the whites, and had gained some knowledge of the Christian religion, desired to be baptized. And on the 18th of October, 1734, he subscribed or assented to a brief declaration of his faith, and was baptized by the Rev. Mr. Bull, taking the name of Ebenezer. This service was performed at the residence of Lieut. Umpachene, who lived near Green River, some two miles south of this village. But there was no church organized at this time. In the month of December, Mr. Sargeant returned to New Haven. The next spring he made the Indians another short visit.

In July, 1735, he left New Haven, for the purpose of commencing his missionary labors in this region. He was ordained at Deerfield on the 31st of August, 1735. He immediately visited his friends in New Jersey, and reached his missionary field in this town, October 26, four days after the ordination of Mr. Hubbard. "Lord's Day,

November 2, baptized Capt. Konkapot, his wife, and one child. Lord's Day, November 16, Umpachene and his wife and children were baptized." During the greater part of two years he continued to reside in this town. The Lower Housatonic was his home; because there were no white or English families in the Upper Housatonic, with whom he could board. In the spring of 1737, Col. Ephraim Williams and Mr. Josiah Jones, with their families, immigrated to the Upper Housatonic, to aid Mr. Sargeant, and his assistant, Mr. Woodbridge, who was a school teacher, in their missionary labors among the Indians; and it was not till this year, 1737, that Mr. Sargeant took up his permanent residence in Stockbridge.

"In the winters of 1734 and 1735, and of 1735 and 1736, the Indians were instructed in Great Barrington; and in the intermediate summer in Sheffield * and Stockbridge. Upon their removal to Stockbridge, in May, 1736, Mr. Woodbridge removed there with them, and boarded with Capt. Konkapot. Mr. Sargeant boarded with a family in Great Barrington until January, 1737, when he removed to Stockbridge, and boarded with Mr. Woodbridge, who had settled in a family state." "And on the 4th day of June, 1738,"—says Dr. Field,† (Prof. Dewey is confident it should be 1737,‡) "the English and Indian professors of religion for the *first time* sat down together at the table of the Lord." This seems to imply that there was no church in Stockbridge previous to this

* That is, in the north part of Sheffield, which is now a part of Great Barrington.

† History of Berkshire County, page 251.

‡ "The Sabbath occurred on the 4th of June, 1737, but not in 1736, nor in 1738. The Communion was probably on the Sabbath, and if so, it must have been in 1737, if on the 4th of June. How natural to suppose that the English, and the baptized Indians, should organize themselves into a church, and enter into covenant engagements to each other at their first communion season." Why may not this with propriety be considered the origin, the formation or first public gathering of the church in Stockbridge?

time. At what time the church in Stockbridge was organized, we do not know, as the early records of that church (if there ever were any) are lost. Stockbridge was incorporated, and received its present name, in 1739 ;—six years after the incorporation of Sheffield. If now the question should arise,—Which is the first or oldest church in the county?—you have only to glance at the historical facts in the case, to convince you that that honor belongs to the church in Sheffield.* But if Stockbridge has no valid claim to be considered the oldest church in the county, it certainly has been most highly favored. For where is the other church in New England, that has enjoyed the labors of four such distinguished men in succession, as the Rev. John Sargeant, the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, the Rev. Dr. Stephen West, and the Rev. Dr. David Dudley Field.

Along the banks of our beautiful Housatonic, and probably not far from the spot where we are now assembled, Sargeant passed the largest portion of the first two years of his missionary labors among the River Indians. It would be pleasant for us to linger here, if the time would permit, and call up the scenes of interest which have transpired in this delightful valley, where about forty persons, adults and children, were baptized in the course of the first winter of his missionary labors, and about the same number were gathered into a school. It was probably not far from this village, that Sargeant taught, and prayed, and wept, and sung ; and here early and often pointed the awakened Indian to the Saviour, and urged him to look and live.†

Here it was that the red man, laying aside his tomahawk and raising his streaming eyes to Heaven, exclaimed in his native dialect, “Guttummaukalumme, guttum-

* Appendix No. 1.

† The great Indian wigwam probably stood a little north of the residence of David Leavitt, Esq.

maukalummeH,—Have mercy on me, have mercy on me.” And here too it was that many professed their interest in the Saviour, and brought their children to be baptized. Heathen customs were renounced : and a stand was taken in the cause of Temperance, which might well put to blush many modern professors. So sudden and surprising were the changes among them, that “they compared the past with the present by sleeping and waking, by darkness and light.”

I have been thus minute and extended in my remarks on this part of my subject, because the labors of Sargeant among the Indians have been so associated with his residence in Stockbridge, that his early efforts in this town seem, in a great measure, to have been lost sight of and forgotten ; when in fact the early history of this missionary enterprise and the early history of Great Barrington are closely connected.

After Sargeant and his little flock left this town, and settled in the Upper Housatonic, in 1737, public worship was probably continued here with more or less regularity, until this Society was incorporated as the second Parish in Sheffield, in 1740. As early as 1742, the Rev. Thomas Strong, of Northampton, was invited to settle here, but he was afterwards ordained in New Marlborough. The next candidate that was invited here was Mr., afterwards Dr., Samuel Hopkins. At the time of receiving this invitation, he was teaching a school in Northampton, and studying theology under the Rev. Mr. Edwards.*

Turning to his private journal, we learn that on the 20th of June, 1743, as he returned from school, he found Mr. D. Ingersol at the house of Mr. Edwards. He had come to invite Mr. Hopkins to go and preach at Housatonic. “Gave him no answer that evening. The next morning gave him encouragement that I would go the next week.”

* Appendix, No. 2.

After describing his journey to this place, he remarks,—
 “Preached here to-day, July 3, 1743, from 1st John, v. 12.
 Had some freedom. In the afternoon, John, iii. 36. Had
 greater liberty in speaking. No visible effect of the word
 to-day, though the mass of the people seem serious and
 attentive.”

After preaching here a few months, he was invited to
 the pastoral care of this infant society. This church was
 organized, and Mr. Hopkins was ordained its first pastor,
 December 28, 1743. It was then known as the Second
 church in Sheffield. The churches invited were the
 Second church in Springfield, Rev. Samuel Hopkins,
 pastor; the church in Westfield, the Rev. John Ballantine,
 pastor; the First church in Sheffield, the Rev. Jonathan
 Hubbard, pastor; the church in Stockbridge, the Rev. John
 Sargeant, pastor; and the Second church in Northampton,
 the Rev. Jonathan Judd, pastor. And it is pleasant to
 know that David Brainard, that distinguished missionary
 among the Indians, was also present on this occasion.*
 This was the second ordination in this county. Mr.
 Strong's, in New Marlborough, was the third; and Mr.
 Bidwell's, in Tyringham, was the fourth.

Dr. Hopkins remained here twenty-five years, or until
 Jan. 18, 1769, when at his own urgent request he was
 dismissed. The church was very unwilling to part with
 him, but his salary was not paid with sufficient punctuality.

* “Dec. 28, 1743. Rode about six miles to the ordination of Mr.
 Hopkins. At the solemnity I was somewhat affected with a sense of the
 greatness and importance of the work of a minister of Christ. After-
 wards was grieved to see the vanity of the multitude. In the evening,
 spent a little while with some Christian friends, with some satisfaction;
 but most of the time I would rather have been alone.”

“Dec. 29. Spent the day mainly in conversing with friends; yet
 enjoyed little satisfaction, because I could find but few disposed to con-
 verse on divine and heavenly things. Alas! what are the things of this
 world, to afford satisfaction to the soul! Near night returned to Stock-
 bridge.”—*Dwight's Life of Brainard*, page 122.

The parish had been delinquent for five or six years. As the result, an embarrassing debt had been contracted. These arrearages were now all claimed. The people felt too poor to meet the demand, and provide for the current year. The minister felt that he could not remain, while there was no prospect of his receiving a support for himself and his rising family. Still a majority of the church were for a long time opposed to taking measures for his dismissal. They finally yielded with great reluctance to a separation.

This church consisted originally of five members. On the 5th of February following, twelve others were added. During the ministry of Dr. Hopkins there was no general revival of religion in this town. Over this general declension, he mourned with bitterness of spirit. But the influence which an individual exerts in this life, reaches far beyond his mortal existence. It is a great principle in the Divine government, that one soweth and another reapeth. The harvest of a good man's labors is often thrown at a distance. The future is the legitimate growth of the present. The faithful labors of Dr. Hopkins here were by no means lost. On the other hand, his influence for good was wide and lasting. Most of you must be aware of his instrumentality in the conversion of Mr. David Sanford;—whose descendants, to the third generation, are in the ministry;—and how the late Dr. West was led by his faithful labors to see the error of his ways, and to seek a good hope in Christ. He was likewise instrumental in the conversion of many souls among his own people; a fact which he mentions with profound humility concerning himself, and devout gratitude to God. During his ministry in Great Barrington he received into the church one hundred and sixteen persons, all of whom have long since passed away.

The history of Mr. Sanford's remarkable conversion, through the instrumentality of Dr. Hopkins, has often

been related, and furnishes a most instructive illustration of that saying of the Bible, "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Dr. West, who entered the ministry without having experienced the power of religion on his own heart, was led by the kind and judicious instruction of Dr. Hopkins, to seek a good hope through grace. This change in his feelings led to an entire change in the character of his public ministrations, and rendered him one of the most bright and shining lights in our New England churches.*

After the dismissal of Dr. Hopkins, this church was destitute of a pastor nearly eighteen years. During this long vacancy, only twelve persons were received to the communion. It must have been in a low condition. Few came to the solemn feasts of Zion. On the 4th of May, 1787, the Rev. Isaac Foster was ordained the second pastor. It is but quite recently that I have been able to obtain any authentic information respecting him. I learn that he was born at Wallingford, Conn., April 21, 1755, and was graduated at Yale College in 1776. He remained in the ministry in this place just three years. During this period he admitted five persons to the church. Leaving this place, he was installed at Pittsgrove, N. J., in 1791, where he died, June 2, 1794, aged thirty years; having continued in the ministry there, the same length of time that he did here,—three years.

Very honorable mention is made of his character and attainments. He is represented as a man possessing "a mind firm, resolute and active; a genius vigorous and comprehensive; a heart tender, candid, and ingenuous; and by divine grace formed to the love of evangelical truth and piety; and uniformly exhibiting a manly and consistent deportment; he made rapid advances in knowledge; was happy in every domestic relation; faithful in

* Appendix No. 3.

ministerial duty ; beloved by the people of his charge ; successful in winning souls to Christ ; patient under bodily infirmities ; and undaunted by the king of terrors. A late successor in the ministry at Pittsgrove, has often been heard to speak of Mr. Foster's pastorate, though brief, as highly acceptable and useful ; and states that he was greatly beloved by the elder members of the church who knew him.*

The Rev. Elijah Wheeler, the third pastor of this church, was born at Pomfret, Ct., August 28, 1767. His parents were professors of religion, who trained up their children in the great doctrines of grace, and in the duties of the Christian life. His youth is said to have been marked with many interesting and dangerous incidents, which led him often to say that the grace of God was remarkably manifest in preserving him from destruction, during his early years.

Without the aid of a liberal education, he established himself in 1791, as a physician in South Britain, Ct. In 1793, he was united in marriage to a daughter of the Rev. Jehu Minor, of South East, in the State of New York. In 1795, his attention was suddenly roused to his spiritual welfare, on reading a sermon by President Edwards "on the unreasonableness of indetermination in religion." His anxiety became at once overwhelming and inexpressible. He did not, however, consider himself a Christian until three or four years afterwards. In 1796, by the blessing of God on the labors of his father-in-law, he was brought to realize a comforting sense of pardon. "While in the act of prayer, from experiencing the greatest distress in view of my turpitude, hardness and guilt, and from a deplorable impression that it would never be otherwise with me, and feeling as though God had forever departed from me," he said in his private journal, "I became

* Appendix No. 4.

possessed of the most delightful views of God ; I seemed to forget myself wholly, and to have no thought or concern about myself." The happiness which followed, he said, "I will not undertake to describe, because it appeared indescribable, or as the Apostle says, 'unspeakable and full of glory.'" The hope which he immediately experienced, he continued to possess. It was his support under the most trying circumstances, and in the darkest hour. In 1799, he made a profession of religion. He was now engaged in an extensive medical practice. But he had been impressed for four years with a strong and growing desire to preach the gospel. He pursued the study of theology under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Minor. But his slender health, and many professional calls, prevented his entering upon the work of the ministry until 1804; when he was examined and approbated by the Hudson Presbytery at Newburgh, N. Y.

I learn from a manuscript sermon of Mr. Wheeler's, in my possession, written in 1823, that he came to this county in the latter part of October, 1805, and was soon requested to preach to this society half of the time, through the fall and winter; which he did. His first sermon to this people was preached November 21, 1805. A part of the time during the succeeding winter, he pursued the study of theology with the Rev. Dr. West, of Stockbridge. After preaching twelve Sabbaths, he received an invitation to preach for a certain time on probation, for settlement. Receiving a regular call from the church and society, he was ordained and installed, September 24, 1806. He says, "During the summer of this year, a devotedness and spirit of prayer seemed to prevail among the members of the church. Their friendship and communion appeared to be as becometh the Gospel of Christ;" and adds, "It was the first favorable symptom that I witnessed."

The church, at the time of his settlement, consisted of twenty members; six males and fourteen females. The

16 society was small and feeble. Yet there was this encouraging circumstance. During the long vacancy between Mr. Foster's dismissal and Mr. Wheeler's settlement—nineteen years—the church and society were preserved, like the burning bush, from extinction. Reading and prayer meetings on the Sabbath were almost uniformly maintained, when there was no preaching. Thus the Sabbath was sanctified, and the church was preserved; correct principles were inculcated, and good morals were maintained. The regard of the people for the Lord's day, their decorous deportment in the house of God, were remarked by Mr. Wheeler with no small surprise on the first Sabbath he passed here. Among those most efficient in sustaining these meetings, the name of Deacon Nash has often been mentioned.

During Mr. Wheeler's ministry in this place, additions were made to the church from time to time. But in the year 1816, there was more than usual attention to religion. The instrumental cause of this awakening, was the sudden death of George Beckwith, Jr., a young man of promise and respectability. For a time as many as ten or twelve young persons, of whom I was myself one, were in the habit of meeting Mr. Wheeler once a week, at the house of Deacon Remely, for personal counsel and advice. But the most general revival was enjoyed in 1822. During this period his labors were beyond his powers of endurance, and he was overtaken with a disease, which so much enfeebled him, that he was afterwards able to do but little in the ministry. He was an invalid for about five years. During all this trying period he was sustained and soothed by those consolations which he had so often ministered to others. Mr. Wheeler filled up a peaceful and prosperous pastorate of seventeen years. In his "Annals of the American Pulpit," Dr. Sprague speaks of his ministry as having been "highly prosperous." On a small salary, and with slender health, he labored faithfully in the pulpit and

out of it. In all his labors and discouragements, there were always an Aaron and a Hur who stayed up his hands. He could always rely with safety upon the counsel and co-operation of those excellent men, Deacon Remely and Deacon George Beckwith. During Mr. Wheeler's pastoral connection with the church, there was a regular increase in numbers and strength, (he admitted one hundred and fifty-two,) so that when he was dismissed at his own request, in consequence of the failure of his health, in February, 1823, the church embraced one hundred and twenty-six members, all walking in the faith and fellowship of the gospel. They were happy in him, and he was happy in them.

Mr. Wheeler lived in great harmony in the conjugal relation. By his first wife he had three children, but one of whom still survives. Mrs. Wheeler died in 1812. In 1813, he was married a second time to Miss Elizabeth Whiting, a woman of great excellence of character, and every way qualified to make the relation both happy and useful.*

Mr. Wheeler was a laborious man. He usually attended three meetings on the Sabbath; and ordinarily delivered a lecture in the course of the week. His sermons on the Sabbath were always carefully written. How he could attend so many meetings, and visit his people as much as I learn from his Diary he did, considering how extensive his parish was, surpasses my comprehension.

He was given to hospitality, without grudging. Mr. Wheeler was a minister every day in the week. He was sociable, and few men enjoyed the society of their friends better than he did; and yet unguarded or frivolous words rarely if ever fell from his lips. He was not in the habit of indulging in witticisms at home or abroad. He had a pleasant smile for every one, which told of the kindly

* Appendix No. 5.

sympathies of his soul. Everywhere he was an example of believers "in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity." I remember passing a Sabbath intermission at the house of Mr. Ezra Kellogg. Just as we were seated, Mr. Wheeler entered. Casting upon us his usually pleasant smile, he said, "My friends, I want to preach the gospel in such a manner, that Christians may know that they are Christians;"—an incidental remark, but an excellent sermon.

Mr. Wheeler was a man of rather quick and ardent temperament. His attachments and aversions were strong. He was unwearied, methodical, and persevering in his pursuits. As a Christian, he was meek and humble, fervent and prayerful. His attainments as a divine, considering the disadvantages under which he labored, were certainly very creditable. His views were thoroughly evangelical, according to the school of Hopkins. His positions were clearly stated, and well defined, and defended. The great subject of his preaching was Christ and him crucified. As a pastor he was plain and familiar, affectionate and faithful. In all his intercourse with his people he seemed ever to keep the end of his ministry in view. He watched for souls as one who expected to account for his stewardship. And if he did not excel others in unction or eloquence, he caused his light to shine brightly. But what more is needed to constitute a man a sacred orator, than a pleasant voice, an expressive countenance, a pious soul, and a feeling heart,—joined to a good life? Mr. Wheeler possessed these qualifications; and gave full proof of his ministry.

"In his duty prompt to every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all,
And as a bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies;
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

In what I have now advanced respecting Mr. Wheeler, I have spoken from my personal recollection. Avoiding all extravagant eulogy, I have aimed to perform the office of an honest historian and biographer.

He died in the triumphs of faith, on the 20th day of March, 1827, in the fifty-seventh year of his age. Near the close of his life he frequently remarked to his family and friends, "Death has lost its sting." "There is no Jordan between me and the promised land." Thus lived, and died, one of the best and most lovely men that has ever graced a Berkshire pulpit. The text at his funeral was well chosen: "And Enoch walked with God."*

The Rev. Sylvester Burt, the fourth pastor of this church, was a native of Southampton, and was born September 30, 1780. He was the eldest son of Deacon Samuel Burt; and was trained up in the serious manner practiced by the Puritans of New England; and his early training was followed by the happiest results. As the result of his early dedication to God, and the prayers and Christian example which followed, he became the subject of renewing grace in the morning of his days. He was fond of reading, and especially of reading the Scriptures. He had carefully read the Bible through before he was seven years old. He made a profession of religion in his native town,—where he was greatly beloved,—in the year 1803.

He fitted for College at Westfield Academy, and was graduated at Williams College in 1804. His class was large, and contained a number of young men of talents and high attainments. At his graduation there was no valedictory oration pronounced, because the Faculty could not unitedly decide whether it should be assigned to Burt, Waldo, or Woodbridge.

After his graduation, he passed a short time in teaching in Middletown, Conn., and then commenced the study of theology, with the Rev. Dr. Lothrop, of West Springfield, and was licensed to preach the gospel by the Hampshire Association, in October, 1805. He was three times settled in the ministry; over the church in Western, now Warren, from March 11, 1806, to December 31, 1811; at New Marlborough South, from April 21, 1813, to December 22, 1822; and at Great Barrington, from February 12, 1823, until his death, January 10, 1836.

Mr. Burt was twice married. His five children by his first marriage,—two sons and three daughters,—early became members of the church. His first wife died soon after he came to Great Barrington. He was afterwards married to Miss Amanda Nash, who still survives. By this marriage they became the parents of one child, a daughter, who was married to Prof. Bascom, of Williams College, but went down to an early tomb.

Mr. Burt was an instructive preacher. His preparations for the sanctuary were ordinarily made with great rapidity. And in addition to his two sermons on the Sabbath, he frequently taught a Bible class, and attended a Sabbath evening meeting, at which he usually delivered a lecture.

Besides the labors of the Sabbath, it was not unusual for him, especially in times of religious interest, to deliver two or three evening lectures in the course of the week. He had a happy talent at conducting social meetings, and his addresses to professors of religion, his words of counsel to the young convert, and his exhortations to the unawakened, were earnest, feeling, and impressive. The consequence was his services were often sought by his brethren in seasons of revival. He was a ready man. His style of writing and speaking were both easy and natural. He was affectionate and spiritual, often searching and solemn. On sudden occasions his address and prayers were generally

appropriate ; sometimes moving and melting. He was a successful preacher. Revivals were the joyful experience of his ministry. He admitted one hundred and ninety-six individuals to this church ; an average of fifteen annually.

He was a man of ardent temperament. His piety was of a high order. He was a warm friend, and took great delight in social intercourse. He always received his brethren in the ministry, as well as private Christians, with a hospitable welcome. He was endowed with a rich vein of wit, which often showed itself in his intercourse with friends ; but nothing of it ever appeared in the pulpit. His reverence for the sanctuary, and for the themes which here engage the attention, opened other fountains of emotion, and placed him among the most serious and solemn preachers. In the latter part of his life he feared he had in some instances indulged his wit at too great an expense. Still, it is interesting and pleasant to remember and contemplate his many and acknowledged excellencies as a man, a scholar, a friend and a minister.

In the month of November, 1833, he took a severe cold, which greatly impaired his health. For a short time he was compelled to suspend his ministerial labors entirely ; and he never fully recovered. Near the close of 1835, in view of some unpropitious circumstances, he was consulted on the subject of asking for a dismissal. In view of the whole case, however, he felt that he could not take the lead in any course of measures, designed to secure such a result ; but finally expressed a willingness to submit the whole subject to a mutual council. At this juncture the Lord interposed, and, as we trust, called his servant home to his final rest. He died suddenly on the Sabbath, January 10, 1836, the very day he was expecting to preach from the text,—“ I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day. The night cometh in which no man can work.”

" At midday came the cry—
 To meet thy God prepare ;
 He heard and caught his Captain's eye ;
 Then, strong in faith and prayer,
 His spirit with a bound
 Left its encumbering clay ;
 His tent at sunset on the ground,
 A darkened ruin lay."

The council which was to have met on the Thursday following, to sanction his dismissal, assembled to attend his funeral, when an appropriate discourse was delivered, by the Rev. Mr. Bradford, of Sheffield, from 1st Thess. iv. 13–18. The circumstances connected with his death were made instrumental in the awakening and conversion of a number of individuals.*

Of those pastors or laymen who have been connected with this church, but are still living, it is not my purpose to speak.

If now you *review* the days that are past, you will find it pleasant to remember that this church has been favored with *an evangelical ministry*. If the first pastor did not excel others as a preacher, yet as a divine—a theological writer—he has but few if any superiors in New England. His writings are numerous ; and have secured for him an imperishable name. His great work—his *System of Divinity*—cost him years of hard labor. His leading aim in it—and that is the grand peculiarity of all his writings—is to show that " all true virtue or real holiness consists in disinterested benevolence ! " According to his teaching, disinterested benevolence holds the same place in the moral world, that the attraction of gravitation does in the natural world ; it is the great bond of union. Next in importance to his *System of Divinity*, if not in every respect equal to it, must be placed his masterly *Treatise on the Millennium*. It was an honor and a blessing to this

* Appendix No. 7.

people, to have such an eminent divine stationed here for a quarter of a century ; leading this infant flock “ into the green pastures, and beside the still waters.”

With respect to all our deceased pastors we were a favored people. All that we know of Mr. Foster is, he has left the savor of a good name. Mr. Wheeler’s life and ministry are fresh and precious in the recollection of some who are present. Gentle, amiable, affectionate in his intercourse, decided in his character, kind and unwearied in his public ministrations, he secured the confidence of the community, and the love and co-operation of his people, and the ‘ pleasure of the Lord prospered in his hands.’ Every year witnessed additions to the church ; and difficulties and divisions were almost unknown or unheard of, during his pastorate. Mr. Burt exhibited superior talents, and at times was eloquent and powerful in his pulpit performances. As a preacher he ranked among the leading clergy of the county. He was familiar in his intercourse, and was esteemed as a pastor.

“ These all died in the faith ” ; leaving to posterity, not an inheritance of wealth, but the legacy of that good name which is precious as ointment poured forth. Different as they were from each other as thinkers, as preachers, as Christian pastors, still they were all stars in the Saviour’s right hand ; where, like the stars of evening, they shone with different degrees of brightness. Harmonizing in sentiment, yet differing in gifts, each reflected his own peculiar glory. One after another these stars have set ; but their light remains, and shines brightly still. The mild radiance of their example and influence has never departed from this valley, nor faded from these green hills. Succeeding pastors and private professors still rejoice in their light, and will continue to do so, till that morning shall dawn to which they looked forward, and hailed with such joyful anticipations,—“ a morning without clouds.”

It is pleasant to know that *in government*, this church

has always been Congregational. The beauty and excellence of the Congregational government are, that the church and society live together as distinct bodies in partnership, and at the same time, as independent bodies in their proceedings :—the church taking the lead in all spiritual affairs ; the society taking the oversight of all the temporal affairs. It is with great pleasure that I am able to say that such has been the uniform practice of this church and society for more than one hundred years.

This church, and most of the early churches in this county, have from the beginning, maintained the worship of God according to the simple rights of Congregationalism. All their ecclesiastical proceedings have been in accordance with the Congregational polity. The pastors of these churches were an honor to their profession. Where can you find more able divines, or more faithful preachers, than Hopkins, and West, and Judson, and Catlin, Hyde and Shepard, and Field, and others whose names were once familiar ? Where will you find a higher standard of piety than was maintained in these churches in earlier days ? Where a deeper reverence for God and the institutions of religion ? Where a higher standard of education ? Where more of a spirit of benevolence and Christian enterprise ? Such are some of the happy fruits of our Congregationalism. What other form of church government has ever produced more precious results ?

It is a ground of gratitude to God, that in sentiment this church has ever been *evangelical* ; or in accordance with the Gospel. The doctrines of grace, the doctrines of the Reformation, embraced and defended by the venerable Puritans of New England, were cordially accepted by the early pastors, and by the private members of this church. In their general outline they include the existence and perfections of God, as the basis of all true religion ; man's entire moral depravity ; the proper humanity, the supreme divinity, the atonement and intercession of the Lord Jesus

Christ ; the renewal and sanctification of the heart by the special agency of the Holy Spirit ; justification by faith ; the purposes of God respecting his church ; the perseverance of all true believers in holiness ; the endless happiness of the righteous, and the endless misery of the wicked. These, with their associated doctrines, include the sentiments which were embraced and ably defended by the early pastors and members of this church.

This church as a body has uniformly stood "in the old paths;" and the experience of more than one hundred years has, I trust, engraven the truth upon our hearts, as with the point of a diamond, that "the old paths" are "the good way" which will afford permanent "rest to the soul." Do not mistake my meaning. We embrace and prize these doctrines, not because they were so heartily embraced and ably defended by the first pastor of this church, and by his early successors, but because we believe they are contained in the Word of God. These truths have in all ages afforded consolation to pious minds, and awakened the opposition of the unrenewed heart. These truths confer upon the system of Christianity its grand superiority over every other system of religion. Blot them from the Bible, and you annihilate the distinctive features of Christianity, and leave us with nothing but the religion of nature.

The piety of the fathers of this church, it gives me pleasure to add, has ever been *spiritual and practical*. They were warmly attached to their mode of church government ; they were decided in their adherence to the doctrines of grace ; still, their religion was the religion of the heart, as well as of the understanding. It was practical, as well as experimental. The genius of their piety consisted in that love "which seeketh not her own ;"—"which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits."

They set a high value upon the institutions of religion.

When there were but thirty families in this town, and their resources were scanty, they became incorporated into a separate parish, and took measures to build a meeting-house and secure the stated ministrations of the Gospel. They were willing to make sacrifices to secure to their children and children's children the divinely appointed means of grace.

To the religious education of their children, our fathers attached great importance, and gave early attention. Some who are present, I doubt not, can well remember with what care their parents and their pastor early taught them the Assembly's Shorter Catechism—those first principles of Christianity, which are now remembered as among the most interesting and cherished lessons of their childhood.

Our pious fathers maintained the stated worship of God *in their families*. The Bible was read, and prayers were daily offered. When they sat down to their meals, the divine blessing was implored; and when they rose from the table, thanks were uniformly returned. By family worship, both parents and children were happily prepared for the devotions of the closet. These seasons of devout worship were the best preparation for all the other duties of life; and afforded the greatest encouragement to expect the blessing of Heaven.

The early fathers of this church, *statedly attended* on the means of grace. They "took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company." They were none of your modern half-day worshippers. They regarded a merely occasional attendance on public worship, as little better than none at all. From their own happy experience they could testify, that it is the stated and punctual attendant on the means of grace that grows and thrives in the courts of the Lord.

And I must, after the example of the Apostle, be permitted to name some of the pious and excellent women

who were lights and ornaments in this church, fifty years ago. With grace of manner and dignity of person, as I remember them, they united that "meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." There were Mrs. Nash, Mrs. Moses Hopkins, Mrs. Ezra Kellogg, Mrs. Gen. Ives, Mrs. Gen. Whiting, Mrs. Bacon, Mrs. Leavenworth and Mrs. Woodworth, besides some others of note in remote parts of the town. These godly women, "whose names are in the book of life," labored efficiently with the Christian men of those days, by their influence and prayers, for the furtherance of the Gospel.

It would afford me sincere pleasure to speak of some of the good men who labored so unitedly and efficiently to sustain the interests of religion in this place in earlier days; but in attempting to do justice to the memory of some, I fear there would be painful omissions. I should not know where to begin or end the enumeration. My intimate acquaintance; however, and brief connection with the excellent family of Deacon Beckwith, is remembered with affectionate interest, and authorizes me to say, that his dignified bearing, his cheerful and generous hospitality, his intelligent piety, and liberal support of this church and society, placed him among the prominent men, not only in this town, but in this county.

As I contemplate the days that are past, I find it difficult to realize that this is the fiftieth year, since I became a member of this church. Fifty years is a long period for an individual to be a member of the visible church. Fifty years recalls the names of many great and good men, now gone to their rest, but who have been burning and shining lights in our American Zion;—many events of the highest importance, connected with the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom. What wonderful advances have been made in the cause of Christian benevolence! The hope, and courage, and enterprise of the church have been increased a hundred fold. The conviction is now, I trust, unflinching

that this world can be, and will be, converted to Christ. The last fifty years has taught us that God will carry on the work of conversion and sanctification ; that he will raise up and qualify those who shall be champions for the truth in this and other lands, far beyond what has been done in the past. Can we doubt that revivals of religion will be more precious and powerful than in the past? The days, O brethren, roll rapidly on, when the church will everywhere raise her tearful eyes and ask with the wondering prophet, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" The last fifty years has taught the church to trust in God's infinite resources. Ministers and missionaries, Christian men and Christian women pass away, but their virtues and influence live. The bright harbingers of millennial glory continue to multiply and increase, with every revolving year.

From the past let us glance for a moment at the future. In fifty years more our nation will number seventy millions of inhabitants ; and the resources of our soil will be developed beyond all past experience. And can we doubt that the cause of education and Christian civilization, will keep pace with these onward movements? During the last fifty years the church has witnessed great changes in the missionary enterprise. It is but little more than fifty years, since the little rill first began to flow out from our Mission Park, and from beneath the hay-stack in Williams-town ; and that stream has continued to extend and expand itself, until you will now find it difficult to fix your eye on the pagan nation, or island of the sea, that has not begun to enjoy its fertilizing influence. Glance at another fact. It is now just fifty years since the American Bible Society was organized. The Bible is now translated and printed, in whole or in part, into the language of seven hundred millions of the world's population. And the work of translating it into the language of northern China has been commenced, and when this is completed, it will

give the Bible to two hundred millions more. The sacred volume will then be in the language of nine hundred of the twelve hundred millions of the world's inhabitants. So extensively is the Bible circulated in the East and in the West, that the dwellers in the far East are already beginning to shout to the dwellers in the far West,—“Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?” And the loud and joyful response returns, “The morning cometh.”

My hearers, could I believe, that this church was in danger of becoming untrue to her honorable history; that she was in danger of departing from the faith of her pious founders and early communicants; of losing her spirit of piety, and suffering her unity to be broken, her peace to be blighted, and her beauty to be tarnished, I would beseech heaven and earth to aid me in an effort to prevent it. I would lift up my voice from the cenotaph of Hopkins,* and the graves of Wheeler and Burt in yonder cemetery; I would invoke the shades of those venerable men to utter their warning voice. I would go further still, and call on these surrounding rocks and hills, which time has not changed, to give their testimony concerning the evangelical faith, the Christian harmony, the uniform and efficient piety, which were maintained and cherished by those who lived and labored here in earlier days. But why do I thus speak? Surely, I seem to hear you say, these voiceless objects, the graves of the departed pastors, the Christian men and women whose names are on the records of the church, shall not reprove us.

Oh! my brethren, departures from the faith, the broken unity, the tarnished beauty, the prostrate energy and humbled honor of the church of God are not worth the price they cost. In our souls we feel they are not. What then

* In 1850 a large and beautiful monument, of Italian marble, was rector in the cemetery at Great Barrington, in memory of Dr. Samuel Hopkins, by a grandson, the Hon. Charles W. Hopkins.

remains for us, but to strike hands in a covenant of love? Put on the whole armor of God. Stand up like men in defense of our common Christianity. Contend earnestly against the legions of sin and death. March unitedly forward under the command and conduct of the Great Captain of our salvation; resolved never to strike our colors till our victory is complete. Then soon shall be heard from the rising to the setting sun the loud *Alleluia*—"The Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

Brethren and friends, it is with no ordinary emotions that I stand here before you to-day. Fifty years have nearly completed their round since I became a member of this church, and was one of this congregation, mingling in the devotions of your sanctuary, and listening to the faithful and affectionate teachings of the beloved Wheeler. Since that time, more than a generation and a half have passed away. As I look upon this congregation to-day, I recognize but a very few with whom I was then acquainted. Time has made great changes in the aspect of your beautiful village, but still greater in the aspect of your congregation. Those who were then in the morning of their days, have grown old. All who were then the fathers and mothers in our Israel are now quietly slumbering in their graves. And we, my friends, are fast passing through the same scenes which have borne our fathers and mothers to the tomb. Soon, very soon, we must follow those who have gone before us into eternity. But brief as is the period of our probation, we stand charged with most solemn and interesting duties; and on the manner in which these duties are discharged, depends our spiritual welfare for both worlds. The great work which is essential to prepare us for death and heaven, is repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Rest not, then, till you have secured a well grounded hope in the Redeemer. Nothing else will prepare you for a

peaceful death or blissful immortality. Then, as we pass one after another from the stage of life, we shall be able to say, in the joyful triumphs of faith,—“I know that my Redeemer liveth ;” and “for me to die is gain.”

Oh ! could Hopkins, and Foster, and Wheeler, and Burt, whose spirits have surveyed the glories, and participated in the blessedness of the celestial world, come back and speak to the descendants of those to whom they once ministered—what would they say ? Would they not tell us there is nothing truly valuable, but the kingdom of God ? Would they not entreat us to receive light and admonition from the days that are past, and lay hold on eternal life ? But they are not here. They can speak to their fellow-men no more. They are happy in their home in glory,—reaping the reward of their fidelity. Still from their abode of blessedness, I seem to hear their united expostulation, their anxious and earnest appeal,—“We, then, as workers together with Him, beseech *you*, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX No. 1.

Rochester, Nov. 24, 1865.

REV. C. DURFEE,

My Dear Sir,--You ask for knowledge respecting the earliest churches in the county of Berkshire; and I reply in brief:

1. It is manifest that the Congregational *Society* in Sheffield was organized as early as January, 1733; for at that time, at a town meeting, they "voted to erect a meeting-house, and to employ a person to preach the Gospel." And from this time forward the ordinances of the Gospel were enjoyed there, though the *Church* was not regularly organized until October 22, 1735; and on the same day the Rev. Jonathan Hubbard was ordained as its minister. The members of the Council were, one from Litchfield, Ct., and the others were from Springfield, Northampton, Enfield, and Sunderland. Of the last place Mr. Hubbard was a native. Any other existing church in the county would have been represented. If any settled minister, or any other minister, was then in the county, it must have been Mr. Sargeant. But he is not even alluded to in these doings; and it is a fair inference that he had not taken up his residence in the county at that time.

2. The church in Great Barrington was formed, and their minister, Mr., afterwards Dr. Hopkins, was ordained on the 28th of December, 1743. His congregation was originally, and for a number of years, called the "Second Parish in Sheffield." In this parish, formed in 1740, there was preaching before the formation of the church, by Mr. Strong, in 1742, who was afterwards settled the minister of New Marlborough; very probably there was preaching here still earlier. In this parish, as in Sheffield, the people did not delay preaching till a church should be formed.

3. Stockbridge. The mission to the Indians, who lived in what is Sheffield and Great Barrington, began, in 1734, by sending Rev. Mr. Bull, of Westfield, and Mr. John Sargeant, then a tutor in

Yale College, to explore the field. Mr. Sargeant remained for a time with the Indians, collected a few families to live near each other so as to be accessible, and raised a temporary building for preaching and for the school. This was clearly in the limits of Great Barrington, (for the term 'Stockbridge Indians' was introduced by a fact yet to be noticed,) and near where Mr. Bull baptized an Indian who desired to prove his conversion to Christianity. In December, 1734, Mr. Sargeant left the school with Mr. Timothy Woodbridge, and returned to New Haven as a tutor till the next Commencement. In May, 1735, however, Mr. S. made the Indians a short visit, intending, after Commencement, in July, to enter on the mission. But he must first be ordained himself, so that he could perform all the services of a minister; and his ordination took place at Deerfield, August 31, 1735, under very interesting circumstances, some of the Housatonic Indians being present, who publicly rose and signified their glad reception of Mr. S. as their missionary. No church could have been formed at this period. One Indian had been baptized by Rev. Mr. Bull, so that a church was not considered essential for baptism. Though Mr. Sargeant could not have reached the mission till some time in September or later, yet Dr. Sprague states that, "in a few months after his ordination," Mr. Sargeant "had baptized about forty persons, adults and children." But even children might be baptized without a church if the parents were.

The scattered situation of the Indians was a great barrier to the progress and success of the mission. But an amicable arrangement was made with the scattered Indians to give up their lands to the State, and to accept in return adequate lands further north; and the State of Massachusetts gave to the Indians "a township six miles square, on Housatonic River, immediately north of Monument Mountain," which was accepted. It was laid out in April, 1736, and in May, 1737, the township was "formally confirmed to the Indians, their heirs and assigns." In January of this year the Legislature ordered the "building of a meeting-house, thirty feet broad and forty feet long, together with a school-house." The Indians began to move into this new town in May, 1736, and additions soon made a small village. Provision was made for Mr. Sargeant and Mr. Woodbridge, and four white families only, to reside with the Indians, and these in the settlement. Nothing is said, so far, about a church. (Field, pp. 240-242.) The township was "incorporated, and called Stockbridge;" and hence the name of *Stockbridge* Indians; for before they had been called *Housatonic* Indians, *River* Indians, *Konkepot* Indians. These four English

families, were Col. Ephraim Williams, from Newton, and Josiah Jones, from Weston, in 1737, and the other two, "Joseph Woodbridge, the brother of the schoolmaster, and Ephraim Brown, from Spencer." (Field, 251-2.) "Mr. Sargeant boarded with a family in Great Barrington till January, 1737, when he moved into town, (Stockbridge,) and boarded with Mr. Woodbridge, who had settled in a family state." (Field, p. 251.) There seems to be no plan for forming a church till these events occurred, and there were other friends to unite in church relation with Mr. Sargeant and Mr. Woodbridge.

To this is now to be added the fact, that "the Lord's supper was first administered here (Stockbridge) on the 4th of June, 1738." (Field, p. 250.) We have no proof that any professed religion years before this, as Dr. Field states, because we have accounts only of baptisms, not union to any church. And even at this time there might have been a communion, before the church had been formed.

It is probable, however, that this 1738 should be 1737, for the 4th of June did not occur on the Sabbath in 1736 or 1738, but in 1737. This would be a suitable time, as the missionary and his friends had just become settled in homes with the Indians.

The evidence is complete. In the loss of records, if any were made, we must turn to conclusions from the best statements of relations; and the result is, that a church could not have been formed among the Indians, or at Stockbridge, earlier than 1737, the year that Mr. Sargeant began his residence there.

Very truly, your obedient,

C. DEWEY.

The dates of the formation of other churches are well known; and later, even when Dr. West was settled over the Indian church at Stockbridge, in June 13, 1759, "there were only four settled ministers within the bounds of the county: Rev. Jonathan Hubbard, of Sheffield; Rev. Samuel Hopkins, of Great Barrington; Rev. Thomas Strong, of New Marlborough; and Rev. Adonijah Bidwell, of Tyringham."

APPENDIX, No. 2.

EXTRACTS from Dr. Hopkins's private journal, a copy of which, in his own handwriting, is in my possession.

"June 20, 1743.—Came home from Pelham to-day. I kept the school this afternoon. When I returned to Mr. Edwards's at night,

I found Mr. D. Ingersoll here, from Housatonic, with a desire that I would go and preach there. I have given him no answer yet, but am to see him in the morning."

"*Tuesday, June 21.*—Gave Mr. Ingersoll encouragement that I would go to Housatonic next week. I feel very much at loss about things, and hardly know what to do. This afternoon rode to Westfield."

Number One.—*Friday, July 1, 1743.*—Lit on a very cheap watch to be sold; and, seeing I stand in need of one, I bought it, though not without liberty of recantation. If I know my heart, I desire to use it in the service of God, and hope it is, by his good providence, that I have obtained it.—I did not, according to appointment and my expectations, meet any one here to-day from Housatonic, in order to conduct me there; but accidentally lit on a man going that way so far as Mr. Brewer's, which is within eight miles of it. I set out with him, and, after a long and tedious ride, over exceedingly bad roads, came to Mr. Brewer's, between eleven and twelve o'clock. The next morning came to Housatonic about eleven o'clock; am kindly received and well accommodated to all appearance."

"*Housatonic, Sunday, July 3, 1743.*—Preached here to-day in the forenoon, from 1 John, v. 12. Had some freedom. In the afternoon, John iii. 36. Had a greater liberty in speaking this afternoon. No visible effect of the Word to-day, though the mass of the people seem to be serious and attentive. Mr. Hubbard has sent a desire, this evening, that I would go and preach for him, there being a Fast appointed, on the account of the drought and the worms, which devour, in some places, almost all before them."

"*Sheffield and Housatonic, Monday, July 4, 1743.*—Made some attempts, in the forenoon, to study a sermon to preach at Sheffield. Set out to go there in the afternoon, and preached in Mr. Hubbard's pulpit from Esther iv. 8. Had some freedom in speaking. Afterwards returned to my lodging-place; was treated very civilly by Mr. Hubbard. Mr. Brainerd lodged with me to-night. He came now from the Indians, where he has been for some time, and suffers much among them, by not having conveniences, and things proper for diet and lodging."

"*Housatonic, July 5, 1743.*—Rode to-day out to *Number One*, ten miles from this place, and heard Mr. Sargeant preach a sermon, there being a Fast among this people to-day; after which I preached a sermon from Esther iv. 8. Had no great matter of freedom. I perceive that Mr. Sargeant was not well pleased with it. He made several objections against it to me; and though he did not in plain

words say so, yet he evidently disliked my preaching without notes. It may be that I am in the wrong in thus doing; but I do not see it yet. Oh that God would lead me in the way that I should go!"

"*Housatonic, July 6, 1743.*—Preached this afternoon to a small number of people from Psalm lxxv. 4; was very much shut up both in prayer and preaching. Who can be content to preach with so little zeal for God, and so little desire for the good of souls?"

"*Stockbridge, July 8, 1743.*—Rode from Housatonic to Stockbridge, to-day, about eight miles distant, to see Mr. Sargeant, and in our discourse he denied that the Apostle spoke of himself in the 7th chapter of Romans. We had some talk upon it, but brought nothing to a point. I am not satisfied whether it is from an Arminian principle or not that Mr. Sargeant holds this. I know many Arminians are of his mind as to this chapter."

"This is a most creditable record of his first week's work, during which he preached three times to the people of his future charge. Visited Mr. Hubbard, who had been settled in Sheffield some eight years, keeping a public fast with him and preaching for him; visiting Number One, which seems to have been Tyringham, where another fast was kept, and preaching; paying his respects to Mr. Sargeant, at Stockbridge, besides entertaining his friend and old college acquaintance, David Brainerd, at his own lodgings."

APPENDIX, No. 3.

THE following well authenticated letter, I regret to say, must be anonymous.

REV. CALVIN DURFEE,

My Dear Sir,—You ask for my impressions of Dr. Samuel Hopkins. I will say, briefly, that, from 1814 to 1820, I was pastor of a church in Newport, R. I., and was favored with frequent and very friendly interviews with several of the members of the church of which Dr. H. had been pastor. They were mostly elderly people. And I must say, that my early reverence for the venerable Doctor's abilities and excellence was more than confirmed by this near acquaintance. On two points I was disappointed. Having seen a rather tart and caustic spirit in some called Hopkinsians, I supposed it was inherited from the great Doctor. But I soon became convinced that he was one of the meekest men that has lived since the days of Moses. He was also eminently candid and charitable. There were two women in his church, who were eminent examples

of piety: one, Miss A., saw eye to eye with the Doctor on the subject of submission; the other, Mrs. O., could not. The Doctor wished some one, in common life, carefully to look over the manuscript of his *System of Divinity*; and he not only chose Mrs. O. for that purpose, but actually made alterations at her suggestion. The Doctor usually preached half a day in a way of exposition, until he had gone quite through the Bible more than once. I have sometimes doubted whether all his expositions, (for example,) in his treatise on the Millennium were strictly correct.

The Doctor had a wonderful faculty to address the human conscience. His Fast sermons were a terror to evil doers; especially to slave-traders and slave-holders. He seldom or never undertook to argue a point until he knew that he was in the right; and then he clung to the point till he had carried it. He was a very venerable man; so much so, that when Washington visited Newport, the committee of arrangements selected Dr. Hopkins to walk in the procession by the side of the General. The Doctor was not an elocutionist. In his autobiography he says, "I was not a good speaker, but a bad speaker;" and yet he laid the foundations of truth in perhaps as many good minds as any other man who has lived in New England.

Dr. Hopkins was a benevolent man. When he had sold the copyright of his *System* to a bookseller in Boston, for a thousand dollars, he felt that some of it must be devoted to charity. There was a quarterly prayer-meeting in his church, at which a collection was always taken up; the avails of which were used to prepare and send forth to Africa two colored men as missionaries, of whose intelligence and piety the Doctor had a high opinion. His motive in sending colored men to Africa, was to stop the slave-trade; and he could discover no other way but to convert the whole continent. He concluded, therefore, to throw into the collection fifty dollars as his donation. But just then something seemed to speak in his ear, "O, Mr. Hopkins, that is too much. You cannot afford so large a contribution." The Doctor considered this a suggestion from beneath. He started up and said, "Mr. Devil, I shall give a hundred dollars." Dr. Hopkins was a reformer. His early and successful efforts in the anti-slavery cause will never be forgotten. He was a decided man. Among the customs of the day in which he lived, that of smoking tobacco had become general. Mr. Hopkins had fallen into that custom. At a meeting of ministers, as they were indulging in the practice, and had filled the room with smoke, the wife of the minister of the house had occasion to take something from the room. As she opened the door a cloud of

smoke came upon her and produced a partial suffocation. She covered her face, left, and shut the door. Mr. Hopkins saw it, laid his pipe aside, and concluded at once that it was disgraceful for Christians, and especially for ministers, to adopt a practice which was disgusting; and which would exclude delicate women from their society and conversation. The Doctor never had the least inclination to resume the practice after that. A singular example of the power of reason and principle over sense and habit. After this he made it an object to speak to his clerical brethren and others, against the use of tobacco as not only needless, but highly injurious. And so extensively did he prevail, that it became almost a mark that one who believed with him in doctrine, like him made no use of tobacco.

I could write more; but I have fully indicated what my "impressions" are respecting Dr. Samuel Hopkins; and you are quite welcome to what I have written; only I must charge you to make no use of my name.

APPENDIX No. 4.

REV. CALVIN DURFEE,

Dear Sir,—Yours of the 20th, with inquiries concerning Rev. Isaac Foster, was put into my hands yesterday. It is but little information that I can furnish you, as the records of the church during his pastorate, and for some time before and after, are long since lost. And tradition has left but little more than the savor of a good name. A long and discriminating epitaph, still distinctly to be read on his tomb-stone, (by whom written I know not,) is indeed all that is authentic here, and now to be learned. This is a copy of it:

"In memory of the Rev. Isaac Foster, A. M. For three years pastor of this church. He was born at Wallingford, in the State of Connecticut, April 20, 1755, and died in this place, June 17th, 1794.

"Possessing a mind firm, resolute and active, a genius vigorous and comprehensive, a heart tender, candid and ingenuous, and by divine grace formed to the love of evangelical truth and piety; he uniformly exhibited a manly and consistent deportment, made rapid advances in knowledge; was happy in every domestick relation, faithful in ministerial duty, beloved by the people of his charge, successful in winning souls to Christ, patient under bodily infirmities, and undismayed by the king of terrors."

The church (Presbyterian) was organized under the ministry of the Rev. David Evans, in 1741. Mr. Foster was the *fifth* minister in charge. Of the nine ministers, who have preceded myself here, *five* of them now sleep side by side in the burial-yard of this church, and but a short distance from the church edifice in which all but the first (Mr. Evans) preached the Gospel:—1st, Rev. David Evans, A. M., V. D. M.; 2d, Rev. Nehemiah Greenman, V. D. M.; 5th, Rev. Isaac Foster, A. M.; 7th, Rev. Buckley Carl; 9th, Rev. G. W. Janvier, D. D.

Mr. Janvier told me, more than once, that the ministry of Mr. Foster, though brief, was highly successful, and his memory was greatly beloved by the older members who welcomed him here in 1812.

With great respect, yours truly,

E. P. SHIELDS,

Pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Pittsgrove, N. J.

SEPT. 29, 1865.

In a subsequent letter Mr. Shields writes :

It is but little that I have been able to learn concerning the Rev. Isaac Foster, for three years and a half pastor of the church to which I minister. There are none living whose memories can go so far back as 1794,—seventy-two years ago. The period of his ministry here was so short, that but little indeed can be gathered from tradition as to the value of his work among this people. Whoever was the author of the epitaph upon his tombstone, seems to have had a very high opinion of his merits and character. And what is said of him among our aged people, as received from their ancestors, undoubtedly agrees with that opinion.

There is a very large folio volume, in which he began to transcribe the church records, covering the period of the two pastorates preceding his,—the Rev. David Evans, A. M., V. D. M., 1741 to 1751, and the Rev. Nehemiah Greenman, V. D. M., 1753 to 1779. The title page, in very large letters, is as follows: “Transcribed from the old books by the Rev. Isaac Foster.” In a very clear, bold hand, with a neat, systematic arrangement, he began this important work, with a view to their preservation and transmission to other generations. Unhappily, his transcription ended with the year 1759, of Mr. Greenman’s ministry, and the record is continued by a very different hand; though even then the whole history (official) of Mr. Greenman is not told. No clue is given by this volume to the doings of the two ministers from 1779 to 1791, who preceded him, the Rev. William Schenck, and the Rev. Mr.

Glassbrook. And what is the more to be regretted, there is not a line to detail his own work as pastor, which was so soon terminated by his death, in the fortieth year of his age.

The Rev. George W. Janvier, D. D., who was pastor here from 1811 to 1857, spoke to me several times concerning Mr. Foster, as having been an earnest and faithful servant of Christ, and one of whom the old people (in his early ministry) always spoke with pleasing affection. Undoubtedly, his influence was great and always for good, and, there is reason to think, his ministry here was attended with the Divine blessing.

Regretting that I have no data more reliable, full and interesting, I submit the above to you for whatever use you may be pleased to make of it.

Yours, in the Gospel,

EDWARD P. SHIELDS.

REV. CALVIN DURFEE.

APPENDIX No. 5.

Great Barrington, February 13, 1866.

REV. CALVIN DURFEE,

Dear Sir,—I am happy to comply with your request in giving you my impressions of the late Rev. Elijah Wheeler of this town. He was one whose life it is pleasant and profitable to think upon. I sat under his ministry for four years from 1811, and our intercourse lasted to the close of his life. I had a slight acquaintance with him while he was in the practice of his profession as a physician. After his conversion, I think he commenced the study of divinity with his father-in-law, the Rev. Jehu Minor, at Southeast, N. Y., a man highly respected for his learning and piety. Mr. Wheeler belonged to the old school, as a gentleman of refined manners; social, cheerful, entirely void of offense; and still, serious and solemn; and seemingly never forgetful that he was an ambassador of Christ; and, of course, never omitting an opportunity of speaking a word for his Master. I think he was remarkable for adapting, in social life, his instructions to circumstances. Hence, in a remarkable degree, he secured respect, reverence and affection. Hence, from his intercourse with his people, his influence and authority were more fully secured than from his preaching; though in this, he was respectable. He aimed to be understood; and I think he gave his people sound instruction; and what gave it its highest charm and greatest force, was the conviction that it came from an honest, zealous, loving heart. His life, like that of his divine Master, was the text-book of all he

taught. In that was a power greater than all his other teachings. These are my impressions of our friend Mr. Wheeler. He seemed ever to be engaged "about his Master's business;" and it is wonderful, how much he accomplished: never robust in health; a small salary; and that, never punctually paid; three meetings generally on the Sabbath; appointments at various parts of the town during the week; his visits of the sick; discourses at funerals; his extended social intercourse; and writing two sermons a week for the pulpit. No wonder he died early! But he finished the work appointed him to do; and I look back upon his ministry here as the golden age of the Congregational Church of Great Barrington; in a good sense, of course. They were a united, loving, happy community. Education was prized more—especially the higher grades—than it has been since. The tastes of the people seem to have been raised to a higher grade. It would not be just to ascribe all these to the influence of Mr. Wheeler; for there were many men, at that time, that gave a healthy tone to society, and were ready to second any worthy undertaking: but he was ever foremost, and the people confidently followed his lead; and they were raised to a higher level of social life. The church was, apparently, more knit together in love, and Christian fellowship; and I have no recollection that he ever had a case of discipline to interrupt their harmony. I presume there were cases—if so, they were so wisely managed, that no difficulties followed. He was so meek—so unpretending, that I think few gave him full credit for the talents he possessed. When I commenced this letter, I had no idea of eulogizing the man; but as I called up what I remember of him, I feel that *I* did not appreciate him as I ought. His character brightens as I write, and grows into so beautiful a consistency, that of all the clergy with whom I have since had intimate acquaintance—and they have been numerous—I have not found one that came up more fully to my notion of what a Christian pastor should be.

Affectionately yours,

WILLIAM SHERWOOD.

APPENDIX No. 6.

In the summer and fall of 1822, soon after an extensive revival of religion, Mr. Wheeler's health was so much enfeebled that he was unable to perform his usual ministerial labors. The members of the Berkshire Association each supplied his pulpit one Sabbath. When the Rev. Mr. Burt preached there, early in the fall, it was reported that he had just received an invitation to go to New Orleans, and

had concluded to accept it. This report led to an immediate effort to secure his settlement in Great Barrington; for it was now evident that the solemn and trying hour was at hand, when the people to whom Mr. Wheeler was endeared by a thousand tender and hallowed associations, must be committed to the pastoral care of another. (See Numbers, xx. 25, 26.) During the heavy trial that he was now called to pass through, his Christian virtues and graces never forsook him; but continued to shine brightly. "The watchman of Ephraim was with his God."

"The soul that's filled with virtue's light,
Shines brightest in affliction's night,
And sees in darkness beams of hope."

Mr. Wheeler left a Treatise, covering fifty-six pages, entitled, "The state of my mind in the near, or apparently near, approach of death." He left another paper, entitled, "A voice from the death bed of a dying minister." He left likewise a journal, extending over seventy-two pages, entitled "Reflections," and dated January 1, 1823. These papers were among the last efforts of his pen. Professor Phillips, of Williams College, has examined them, and expresses the opinion that they partake much in their character and spirit of the writings of David Brainard; and he favors the publication of copious extracts. But my friend, J. W. Wheeler, Esq., (son of the Rev. Mr. Wheeler,) modestly suggests, that I "err on the side of caution and reserve, rather than the reverse." All of these papers I feel sure would be read with interest and profit, especially by the people of Great Barrington. I regard them as worthy of publication. They would show at least the graceful manner in which Mr. Wheeler retired from the ministry; not so much how he died, but, what is vastly more important, *how he lived*. The extract or abstract which follows from his journal is too brief to do him justice.

"*Lord's Day, January 22, 1823.* — To-day Brother Burt is expected to give his answer to the call of the church and society; and if in the affirmative, it will virtually wed him to this people. I hope he will be led to decide so as to secure the divine approbation, and promote the everlasting interests of this people. My heart has rejoiced that this brother will probably succeed me in the ministry in this place. As far as the union between Mr. Burt and this people progresses, my pastoral relation declines according to my voluntary agreement with the church and society.

"In this I have experienced a great trial. To be deprived of my office as overseer of this flock,—to give up my charge to another

man, and at the same time be unable to preach, or perform any pastoral duties, has borne with great weight upon my mind, and seemed at times insupportable. But the same God who placed me here, and has sustained me for near seventeen years among this people, has enabled me to endure these privations and afflictions in some good degree as becomes a follower of Christ. I hope I exercise some true submission to the will of God, and that he will not leave me to dishonor his name and cause. O how different is the scene of putting *off* the harness from that of putting it on! I desire to praise the great Head of the church that he permitted me to hold the office of one of his ministers, and has sustained me in this field of labor so long. I ascribe it to the Divine forbearance that I have been permitted to enjoy the friendship of this people so many years, and that I have received so many tokens of their liberality and friendship, and that we have lived thus harmoniously together. Especially would I record a tribute of gratitude to God for the evidence I have that he has blessed my labors in the ministry here in the conversion of souls;—that he has permitted me to witness an extensive revival of religion here.

“It is also a subject of praise to God, which I desire to record, that this people have increased in some good measure in numbers and strength; that they have been enabled to build a commodious house of worship, and support the Gospel here statedly so many years. I would bless the Lord that so much brotherly love and union has been manifested in the church,—that the members have, in general, walked so orderly, and that there has been no occasion for rigorous gospel discipline. It is cause of thankfulness, which I desire ever to cherish, that though we experienced no extensive, general revival till the autumn of 1821, yet God did not leave himself without a witness; but from time to time added to this church.

“My God has been kind to me last week in allowing me to hear from my son Josiah, and also in sending brother Burt and my excellent deacons and others, to visit me and pray with me, and manifest their friendship and generosity, as in former years. Now, all these things are ordered by Him, who holds the hearts of all in his hand.

“*Lord’s Day evening.* Mr. Burt has accepted the call to settle with this people. The union now only remains to be formally consummated; and my dismission sanctioned. My prayer is that God may be glorified, and this people saved, by these events.

“*Tuesday, February 11.*—Sent by Mr. Burt three communications to the council in session. Had a sweet season of prayer with Mr. Burt. . . . I stated that I made no objection to being dismissed, or to Mr. Burt’s installation. But such was the tenderness

of the members of the council, that they sent a committee of two ministers to know my feelings more explicitly. Had a precious season of Christian conversation with them. I assured them I was not afflicted in being dismissed.

“*Lord’s Day, February 16, 1823.*—This is the first Sabbath since the 24th of September, 1806, that I have been destitute of the charge of a Church of Christ. During the past week my Divine Master, has taken away from me my stewardship; and I bless his glorious name for all the acquiescence, peace and comfort which he has granted me during this trying scene; for all the willingness and cheerfulness with which he enabled me to resign the charge of this dear church. For months in succession during the year past, it seemed hard to be dismissed, or even to be associated with a colleague; but of late I have been entirely resigned, and wished for the day to arrive, and when it did, I found it one of the happiest days of my life. Here I ought to add, I found it to be so, because God ordered all the circumstances so as to make it pleasant to me. It was just the *time* I wished to be dismissed; for it was on the day that my successor was installed. I had remained in the pastoral office as long as I could be useful with my present state of health. My successor I viewed as a godly man, sound in the faith, sound in mind and body, apt to teach, and possessing in no ordinary degree the requisite qualifications of a minister of Christ. We are on the most friendly and intimate terms with each other; and entire agreement subsisted among all parties concerned in this change of the pastorate. These, I thought, were circumstances all honorable to myself and to the church. I must therefore bless God that my mind has been led to entire acquiescence in all these changes. * * * *

“ELIJAH WHEELER.

“*Great Barrington, February 28, 1823.*”

APPENDIX No. 7.

Chicago, Nov. 9, 1865.

REV. CALVIN DURFEE,

Dear Sir,—You ask for my recollections of the Rev. Sylvester Burt. He was a fellow-townsmen of mine, some three or four years perhaps older than myself, and a member of my class in Williams College, which was graduated in 1804. His father was a worthy deacon in the church of Southampton, Mass.; and two brothers, younger than himself, were highly respectable, evangelical and useful ministers of the Gospel. The family in general was, I think

I may truly say, held in high estimation, in the circle of their acquaintances, for integrity of character, Christian principle, sound sense, warm and generous impulse, and influence ever favorable to the interests of morality, order, and whatever is adapted to purify and adorn society. Sylvester became hopefully pious, and made a public profession of religion in early youth; and, as I suppose, commenced preparation for college, with the special design of becoming educated for the ministry.

As a scholar, Mr. Burt occupied a standing among the first in his class. He was an able, faithful and earnest preacher; ardently devoted to the work to which he had consecrated his life. He was a sagacious reasoner, and remarkable for keenness of wit, and appropriateness of repartee, by which, however, he seldom, if ever, gave offense to those with whom he was associated. He was, indeed, much beloved; though, like other good men, he sometimes met with opposition, on account of the pungency and fidelity with which he declared the counsel of God to his dying fellow men.

As to the tradition of which you speak, it is to me entirely new, except so far as that the choice of Waldo as valedictory orator was unpopular with many, and no oration of the description to which he was supposed to be appointed, was delivered by any one, at the ensuing Commencement. If I mistake not, however, the omission of this valedictory, was but in accordance with the former previous and uniform usages of the College. I have no recollection of any valedictory during my collegiate course; though the appointment afterwards was regarded as necessary to the completeness of the honors of every graduating class. Mr. Burt, I think, delivered a poem on Commencement day.

As to the character and success of his ministry in the latter part of his life, others are much better informed than I can be supposed to be. When I was young, I heard him several times; and always with the conviction of the fervor of his spirit and desires to do good. That he is now reaping the rewards of his faithfulness in a better world, I have no reason to doubt.

Yours truly and fraternally,

JOHN WOODBRIDGE.

Massachusetts

June

Commenced

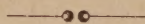
Handwritten text, possibly a title or heading, in a cursive script.

Handwritten text, possibly a name or signature, in a cursive script.

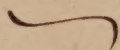
Handwritten text, possibly a date or reference, in a cursive script.

Handwritten text at the bottom of the page, possibly a signature or date.

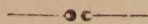
PAMPHLETS.



Massachusetts
Town
Anniversaries



x5543.7



BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.

x5543.7

